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## TWO SPANISH PETITIONS CONCERNING NOTED AUTHORS OF THE NEW WORLD OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The originals and translations of the three documents that appear below were contributed by Mrs. Fanny R. Bandelier, widow of the wellknown archaeologist and historian Adolf Bandelier. The originals of all three exist in the Archivo General de Indias, at Seville, their pressmark being 148-7-26. The petition by Gaspar de Villagra (followed by a notarial affidavit regarding his services) is of interest both because of the man and his book.<sup>1</sup> It calls attention to the fact that there had grown up in the New World a community that already considered itself an entity. Villagra's anxiety to return to New Spain arose probably both from natural home associations and the better

<sup>1</sup> The title of Villagra's book is as follows: *Historia de la Nueva Mexico, del Capitan Gaspar Villagra. Año de 1610. Con Privilegio. En Alcalá, por Luis Martinez Grande. A costa de Baptista Lopez mercader de libros.* The work, which consists of a poem of indifferent literary value but historically important, was "Dirigido al Rey" D. Felipe nuestro Señor Tercero deste nombre." The work was "Reimpreso por el Museo Nacional de Mexico con un apéndice de documentos y opúsculos. Mexico, Imprenta del Museo Nacional, 1900," in 2 volumes. The first volume of the reprint contains the poem entire; the second consists of 4 apendices as follows—documents relating to Villagra, compiled by Lic. D. José Fernando Ramírez; the rare memorial of Father Benavides; unpublished documents from the Archivo Nacional and fragments of the work of Fr. Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza; and the rare *Mercurio Volante* by Carlos de Sigüenza y Gongora. The document reproduced above is not included in the apendices. Villagra was born about 1551 of "old Castilian" parents and appears to have received the degree of Bachelor of Letters at the University of Salamanca. The date of his arrival in New Spain is unknown, but he took part in Oñate's expedition, on July 23, 1598, being appointed by Oñate procurator general of the army and captain of the men who took part in the second expedition to New Mexico. Ten of his thirty years of service were spent in the conquest of New Mexico. He seems to have gone to Spain about 1605, where after a stay of five years, he returned to New Spain to answer an accusation (referred to in the document) of having murdered one Captain Pablo de Aguilar. The trial lasted for over two years, after which Villagra returned to Spain with his family. He finally received a royal appointment as Alcalde in Guatemala but died while en route to his post. Villagra's will and the inventory of his effects exist in the Archivo de Indias, 15-2-377/23.

opportunities that were to be found there in many ways. The petition by the Franciscan, Juan de Torquemada, the author of *Monarchia Indiana*<sup>2</sup> is of interest both bibliographically and historically. On the human side it is valuable as showing something of this much cited author. It is evident that the New World had taken a great hold on Torquemada, perhaps through a combination of the life there, the greater opportunities for advancement in his order by an active man than in Old World centers, and the greater chance to impress himself upon the community than existed in Europe. In the purely religious field there is no doubt of the superiority of the New World of that day over Europe, for to a man imbued with enthusiasm for his work, the New World offered opportunities on the creative side far ahead of any that Europe could promise.—J. A. R.

#### PETITION BY GASPAR DE VILLAGRA, 1613

Muy poderoso Sor:

El Capp: gaspar de villagra dize que como consta desta certificacion de q: hace presentacion él uino de nueva españa siruiendo a Va: Alteza en la nao almiranta de q: fue general don Lope diaz de almdariz y estando aqui pretendiendo q: Va: alteza le hiziere merced de ocuparle en su seruicio mediante los muchos q: consta auer hecho en las ocasiones q: se la han ofrecido—y agora a uenido a entender q: se los an manchado y desdorado imputandole cosas que quando sucedieron estaua mas de quinientas leguas de alli y para voluer por su honra ynocencia y persona tiene necesidad de boluer a la dicha nueva españa.

Suplica humilmente a Va: alteza le ha de dar licencia para poder boluer a la dicha nueva españa haziendole merced de q: no pudiendo pasar de otra manera le den pasage gracioso y una pobre Racion en la capitana ó almiranta desta flota que esta para partir a la dicha nueva españa encargando su persona al general y almirante para que le Reciuian y den Rancho y lo traten conforme a la calidad de su persona cuiu merced humilmente suplica pues quando el pudo y tuuo seruio graciosamente a Va: Alta: con muchos millares de ducados asi graciosos como prestados y con su persona y uida q: en esto se hara a dios seruicio y a el mucha merced.

GASPAR DE VILLAGRA.

[Endorsed:]

El Cap: Gaspar de Villagra

Como lo pide en plaza de Soldado—en 8 de Julio 1613.

## [TRANSLATION]

Very powerful Lord.

Captain Gaspar de Villagra declares that, as may be seen by the certificate herewith presented, he came from New Spain in the service of Your Highness on the flagship of which Don Lope Diaz de Almen-  
dariz was general. While here he endeavored to have Your Highness do him the favor to employ him in your service by virtue of the many services which, as appears, he rendered on all occasions that offered. He has just heard that his services have been defiled and that his reputation has been sullied by persons imputing acts to him, although he was more than five hundred leagues away from them when such things occurred. In order that he may reestablish his honor, innocence, and person it is necessary for him to return to said New Spain.

He humbly petitions that Your Highness grant him permission to return to said New Spain, and that you allow him, since he can cross in no other way, to be given gratuitous passage and a small ration on the flagship or Admiral's-ship of this trading fleet which is on the point of sailing to said New Spain, and that his person be recommended to the general and admiral so that they receive him and allow him sustenance, and that they treat him according to the rank his person deserves. This favor he humbly petitions, for when he could and had them he served Your Highness freely with many thousands of ducats both granted freely and loaned, as well as with his own person and life. By granting this, a service will be rendered to God and to himself a great favor.

GASPAR DE VILLAGRA.

Captain Gaspar de Villagra

His petition for employ as a soldier. July 8th 1613.

## NOTARY'S AFFIDAVIT REGARDING VILLAGRA, 1610

Yo nicolas de Zepeda contador y Scriuano mayor del despacho de las Armadas que por mdo: del Rey nro: Sr: se hazen en la Casa de la contratacion de las Indias desta ciudad de Seuilla Doy fee que en el libro del sueldo del Armada y flota, q: fué a la prova: de la nueva españa El año pasado de mill seyscientos y ocho y boluio el siguiente de seiscientos y nueue de q: fue cappn: Genl: Don Lope Diez de Almendariz Parece puesto un testimonio que dió y entrego Alo: de Camino scriuano de su magd: y mayor q: fue de la dha: armada y flota donde hizo la cuenta y Razon de la gente de guerra que siruio en la nao almiranta della, y en

el parece que el capn: Gaspar de Villagra natural de la puebla de los angeles: H: de hernan perez buen cuerpo cano caricolorado de cinquenta años se alisto por soldado en la dha: nao y siruio en ella desde ocho de Junio del dho: año de seiscientos y nueue hasta Vte: y siete de Septe: del siguiente q: fue despedido en el puerto de S: Lucar de Barrameda con la demas gente de guerra de la dha: nao la q: dha: plaza siruio en lugar de Anto: Rs: soldado que se ausentó del serio: de la dha: nao en dos de Setbre: del dho: año de seiscientos y ocho en la dha: Na: españa segun que todo lo susodho: mas largam: Consta y parece: por el dho: libro y tesimonio del dho: seriuo: mor: original q: esta en la q: me refiero y de pedimto: de la pte: del dho: Cappn: gaspar de Villagra di el pte: testimonio que escriuio en Sevilla en la dha: Cassa de la Contratacion a diez ds: del mes de Mayo de mill y quinientos [sic] y diez años.

En testimonio de verdad

NICOLAS DE ZEPEDA

Seco: Mor:

[Endorsed on back:] El cappn: Villagra suplica por amor de dios se lea esta peticion.

[TRANSLATION]

I, Nicolas de Zepeda, actuary and chief notary of the office of the fleets which are fitted out by order of the King our Lord in the Casa de Contratacion of the Indies in this city of Seville, certify that there appears in the salary book of the armed vessels and trading fleet which sailed last year, one thousand six hundred and eight, to the province of New Spain, and returned the following year, one thousand six hundred and nine, and of which Don Lope Diez de Almendariz was captain general, a testimonial written and delivered by Alonso de Camino, His Majesty's notary, and the chief notary of said armed vessels and trading fleet. In this testimonial he gave a report of the soldiers aboard the flagship of said fleet. In said report, it appears that Captain Gaspar de Villagra, a native of the city of Puebla de los Angeles, son of Hernan Perez, able bodied, gray haired, redfaced, and fifty years of age, enlisted as a soldier on the said ship and served thereon from the eighth of June of the said year six hundred and nine to the twenty-seventh of September of the following year when he was mustered out in the Port of San Lucar de Barrameda, together with the rest of the soldiers of the said ship. He served in said post as a substitute for Antonio Rodríguez (?), a soldier who left the service of said ship in said New Spain on September second of the said year six hundred and eight. All the above stated

appears more at length and may be seen in said book and certification of said chief notary—the original to which I refer. And upon request on the part of said Captain Gaspar de Villagra I gave the present testimony which I write in Seville in the said Case de Contratacion on the tenth day of the month of May one thousand five [*sic*] hundred and ten.

In testimony of the truth,

NICOLAS DE ZEPEDA,  
Chief notary.

[Endorsed on back:] Captain Villagra begs for the love of God that this petition be read.

PETITION BY TORQUEMADA TO RETURN TO NEW SPAIN,  
1613

Señor: Fray Juan de Torquemada de la Horden de San Francisco dice que con licencia de V: Maj: Y por mandado del Comisario General de su horden bino desde la nueua España ha estos Reynos a ynprimir unos libros tocantes ha su rreligion y porque el quiere boluer ha su prouincia de Mex: donde tomó el hauito suppeco: a V: Mag: Le conceda Licenzia Para ello y lleuar Vn conpañero y un criado que trujo Consigo de aquella tierra enq: Reciuiere merd:

Este Religioso ha que Reciuió el habito en S: Franco: de Mexico treynta y tres años: Los Veynte y cinco ha seruido en predicar y Con-fesar a los naturales Mexicanos en las casas principales y de mayor doctrina que ay en aquella provincia. Es una de las mejores lenguas que ay en aquella tierra: Y ha leydo y enseñado La Mexicana en el Colegio de Sta: Cruz a los Religiosos. Y seruido a V: Mag: y a la Religion en muchas ocasiones que ha tenido. Ha sido guardian muchas vezes y diffinidor de Su Provincia dando siempre muy grande exemplo en todo. Los prelados superiores de Nra: Religion, Nros: antecesores por la gran satisfaccion que han tenido de su Virtud y letras Le recomendaron hiziera Una Monarchia Indiana<sup>2</sup> la cual ha echo en tres tomos con muy gran erudicion. Y paraque biniese a ymprimirlos suppliqué

<sup>2</sup> The titlepage of the first edition, according to Medina, reads as follows: "Los veynte y un libros Rituales y Monarchia Yndiana con el origen y guerras de los Yndios Occidentales, de sus poblaciones, descubrimientos, conquistas, con-uersion y otras cosas maravillosas de la mesma tierra. Distribuido en tres tomos. Compuesto por Fr. Juan de Torquemada Provincial de la orden de . . . San Francisco en . . . Mexico. Con privilegio. En Sevilla, por Matias Clauijo. Año de 1615." The edition more commonly known is that of 1723 which was published in Madrid.

p V: Mag: se siruiese de darle licencia para venir a España, y con Ella ha venido y los ha presentado en el Real consejo, y abiendose effectuado desea Volberse a su Prova: con el compañero y criado que Vino. Puede-sele dar la licencia que pide por la mucha falta que hace en aquella Prova.; si V: Mag: no manda otra cosa.

FR: ANTO: DE TREJO  
Comisso: Gral: de Indias.

[Endorsed on back:]

Fray Juan de Torquemada de la Orden de S: Francisco Informe el pe: Comiso: Gl: de las Indias (Rúbrica).

Ynforme dentro

Buelua como vino (Rúbrica).

en 13 de Nov: 1613

[TRANSLATION]

Sir: Father Fray Juan de Torquemada of the Order of Saint Francis says that with permission of Your Majesty and by order of the Commissary General of his Order he came to these kingdoms from New Spain to publish certain books referring to his order, and because he wishes to return to his province of Mexico where he took his habit, I pray Your Majesty to grant him permission to this end and to allow him to take with him a companion and a servant whom he brought with him from that country—in which he will receive favor.

This religious received the habit of Saint Francis in Mexico thirty-three years ago: twenty-five of which he has spent as a preacher and confessor to the native Mexicans in the principal houses and largest *doctrinas* of that province. He is one of the best linguists of that country and he has read and taught the Mexican language to the religious in the college of Santa Cruz. He has served Your Majesty and Religion on the many opportunities that have arisen. He has many times served as guardian and definitor of his province always with great edification in everything. The superiors Prelates of our Order, our predecessors [in office] on account of their great satisfaction in his virtue and learning, recommended him as the one to write a: *Monarchia Indiana*. This he did in three volumes with very great erudition. In order that he might come to publish them, I petitioned Your Majesty to be pleased to grant him permission to come to Spain. Having received this permission he came [hither] and presented the volumes to the Royal Council. Since he has accomplished this he wishes to return to his province with his companion and servant who came with him.

May it be possible to grant him the permission petitioned because of the great need of him in that province, providing that Your Majesty orders nothing else.

FRAY ANTONIO DE TREJO,  
Commissary General of the Indies.

[Endorsed on back:]

Fray Juan de Torquemada of the Order of Saint Francis. Let the Father Commissary General of the Indies make a report (rubric).

Report inside.

Let him return as he came (rubric).

On the 13th<sup>3</sup> of November, 1613.

<sup>3</sup> The copyist of this document was apparently unable to decide whether the date was the 13th or the 15th.